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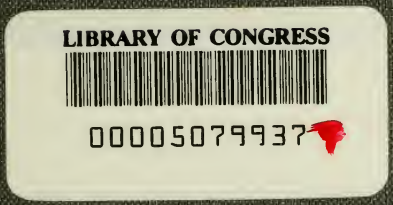

Women
in
American History

By

Harry F. Estill

THE SOUTHERN PUBLISHING COMPANY
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APPENDIX

Women in American History

Value of Woman's Work.—From the founding of the first English settlements in the New World the women of America have bravely and nobly done their part in making our country a great nation. It is true that the pages of history are filled with stories of the deeds of men, while not many names of women are recorded. The reason for this is that woman's work for the most part has been done quietly and inconspicuously. The home has been her Kingdom, and until recent years there was no place for her in public life. To men were left the making of wars, the administration of government, and the leadership of movements affecting communities and states. But even before she entered public life woman's part in the making of our history was just as important as that of men.

Women as Home Makers.—You remember how in the Virginia colony the womanless settlement at Jamestown was rapidly drifting to ruin through homesickness, discontent and idleness. Then a shipload of English maidens arrived at the Virginia shores. The young women became the wives of the settlers and established real homes in the wilderness. Soon everybody was working happily and the colony was saved

from destruction. Since that day through all the years of our country's history, America has been a land of virtuous and happy homes — made so by the faith, courage and intelligence of wives and mothers. Without such homes no country can be truly great.

Women in Time of War.—In every war in which our country has been engaged, women have shown courage and patriotism unsurpassed. During the Revolutionary War and the War between the States, the women endured hardships at home equal often to those of the soldiers in the field. They managed the farms (in the southern states directing large plantations with hundreds of slaves) raised food for the armies, made clothes and bandages for the soldiers, while their hearts were all the while sad and anxious for the safety of husbands, sons and brothers. In the World War, our country could not have made her wonderful record but for the splendid patriotism, intelligence and devotion of our women. They were the most active and efficient supporters of the Red Cross; they were tireless in making clothes and bandages for our soldiers; they nursed the sick and wounded; they helped in liberty bond campaigns to raise money for the government; they wore old clothes and lived on the plainest food in order that our soldiers might be clothed and fed.

The Emancipation of Women.—In recent years a great change has been brought about in the position of women. Home-making is still her first great responsibility, but there have come to her other duties and other opportunities for service. She has entered the ranks of wage-earners, and she has come to share with

men the right of voting, and all the responsibilities of citizenship. Colleges have opened their doors to women on equal terms with men, and unjust laws restricting her control over her children and her property have been repealed. In bringing about these reforms the women themselves have led the way by persuading the men of the justice of their cause.

The First American Women.—Among the Indians, — the first Americans — their women held a lowly place. The Indian "squaw" was the servant of her husband and had no share in directing the affairs of the tribe. Yet in almost every colony there were Indian women who distinguished themselves by their shrewdness, courage and loyal friendship for the white settlers and who often saved the colonists from destruction. Pocahontas in Virginia and Nancy Ward in Tennessee were two brave and faithful Indian women whose deeds have been told in this book.

Women in Colonial Times.—You have read the story of Priscilla Mullins, the Puritan maiden who nursed the sick and comforted the sorrowing during the dreadful first winter in Plymouth.

Eliza Lucas was a South Carolina young woman whose father left her in charge of his plantation while he served as governor of one of the West India islands. Among Miss Eliza's accomplishments was a working knowledge of botany, the science of plants. She made her plantation home a sort of experiment station to discover what tropical plants could best be grown in South Carolina. Her father sent her some seed of the indigo plant out of which dyes are made. After several

unsuccessful plantings, she finally raised a good crop and learned how to extract the coloring matter from the leaves. The dye brought a good price, large quantities were shipped to England, and the raising of indigo[1] became a leading industry of South Carolina and Georgia.

Mrs. Anne Hutchinson was probably the most talked of woman in Colonial times. On her voyage from England to the Plymouth colony, she engaged in a heated argument on some religious subject with one of her fellow passengers. Her opponent, a minister, apparently got the worst of the debate, for immediately upon landing he denounced her as "a heretic and prophetess." Nevertheless, Mistress Hutchinson proceeded to teach and preach the new doctrines. She started meetings for women — a strange thing in those days. She was arrested and tried for "traducing the ministers" and was banished from the colony. With her family she went to the colony of New Netherlands (New York) where she was killed in an Indian massacre. Mrs. Hutchinson possessed courage, sincerity and eloquent speech. Though probably lacking in gentleness and tact, she was the first woman advocate of intellectual and religious freedom in America.

A Brave Woman of the Revolution.—The battle of Monmouth (New Jersey), one of the decisive battles of the Revolutionary War, was fought on a hot summer day. Seeing that the men were exhausted by the heat, Molly Hays, the wife of an American gunner,

1 (Question for pupils: Is the indigo plant still cultivated in Georgia and South Carolina? If not, give reasons.)

brought water to her thirsty husband and his fellow-soldiers during the long hours of the battle. Since she carried the water in a pitcher instead of a bucket, the grateful soldiers greeted her as "Molly Pitcher", a name which has clung to her ever since. In the midst of the battle she saw her husband fall beside his cannon. With a cry she sprang forward, bent over his body for a moment, then seizing the ramrod from his helpless hands, she loaded and fired the cannon, filling her husband's place during the rest of the fight. The next day, General Washington sent for her and made her a sergeant in the American army, while the soldiers cheered for "Sergeant Molly Pitcher."

A Charming "Mistress of the White House".—The beautiful building in Washington City in which the President of the United States makes his home during his term of office is known as the White House. Here the wife of the president presides as "first lady of the land." Many queenly women have filled this place, but no mistress of the White House has ruled with more gentle grace nor has been more greatly beloved than Dolly Madison, wife of James Madison, the fourth President of the United States. With unfailing tact, courtesy and gracious manner, she put the most timid visitor at ease while she disarmed her husband's enemies and made for him new friends. When the British army captured the City of Washington during the War of 1812, Mrs. Madison bravely remained in the city until she received a message from the President telling her to leave. It is said that no American woman has wielded greater social and political influence. Yet

through it all, she kept the charm of pure, unselfish womanhood.

MARGARET HAUGHERY, THE ORPHAN'S FRIEND

A Statue of a Woman.—In the City of New Orleans, there stands on one of the principal streets the marble statue of a woman — said to be the first statue of a woman ever erected in the United States. It represents a plain featured woman, clothed in a simple dress with a little shawl around her shoulders. She is seated in a rustic chair holding a child in her arms. On the base of the statue is carved the one word "Margaret."

A Life of Sorrow.—Margaret Haughery's life had much of sorrow. By the death of both parents she was left an orphan when little more than a baby. Kind friends took the helpless waif into their home where she grew to womanhood. A few years after her marriage her husband died, and not long afterward her baby — her only child — was taken. To earn her living she went to work as laundress in a New Orleans hotel.

Helping the Orphans.—Margaret became interested in an orphan asylum of the city and determined to devote her life to the relief of helpless children. She spent part of every day in the orphan's home, and with a basket in her arms frequently visited the markets, fruit stands and stores of the city, asking for food for her orphans. Nobody refused her. One morning a merchant laughingly offered to give her all she could pile on a wheelbarrow if she would wheel it herself to the orphan asylum. To his surprise she accepted his offer, declaring she would trundle a wheelbarrow full of

food through the streets every day in the week if she could get that much for the children.

Rich but Unselfish.—Margaret was a good business woman. She bought two cows and established a dairy, delivering the milk herself. She made money from her dairy and she added a bakery to her business. As she grew rich, people wondered why she did not wear finer and better clothes. One day a lady said to her: "Why don't you buy a fine dress, Margaret, and look like other people?" "Ah, Madam," said Margaret, "there's too much suffering in the world."

How Her Money was Spent.—Margaret freely spent her fortune upon the poor. Through her generosity three large homes for orphans were established in New Orleans besides a home for the aged and infirm. Whenever she heard of friendless people who were hungry or sick, she hastened to relieve the sufferers. The poor called her "Saint Margaret" and she was also known as "Margaret, the Orphan's Friend."

Honors at Her Death.—During her last sickness the wealthiest and most fashionable ladies of New Orleans hurried to the bedside of this plain, uneducated woman who had no relatives to care for her. When she died, it seemed as if the whole city followed her coffin to the grave. Few great characters in American history have had a more imposing funeral. In the long procession were the children of eleven Orphan asylums, white and black, Protestant and Catholic, followed by the officials of rich and powerful commercial organizations and by high dignitaries of Church, city and State. The next Sunday in nearly all the churches,

sermons were preached with Margaret's life as the text. Who would not wish to be loved and honored as was Margaret of New Orleans, the unselfish friend of helpless children?

SUSAN B. ANTHONY, PIONEER IN THE CAUSE OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS

The Rights of Women One Hundred Years Ago.—About one hundred years ago, there lived in the State of New York a Quaker girl named Susan Anthony, who was destined when she grew to womanhood to lead a great movement for freeing the women of America from the unjust restrictions placed upon them.

During Susan Anthony's childhood, there were many good schools for boys but there were few schools of any kind for girls. Boys and girls were not permitted to attend the same school. Girls had no chance to get a college education as girls' colleges were unknown and men's colleges refused to admit them. Teaching was the only occupation open to women. The laws gave the husband absolute control over the wife's property and money (even though she earned it herself) as well as complete control of the children. The idea of women having the right to vote and hold office had hardly been dreamed of.

Beginning of the fight for woman's rights.—When she grew to womanhood, Miss Anthony in her speeches and writings urged that girls and women had the right to equal advantages with boys and men, and should be permitted to attend the same schools. She induced the legislature of New York to pass a law giving married women the wages they earned, and an equal

guardianship of their children. Through her efforts the women of New York for the first time were admitted to teachers' conventions with the same privileges as men.

The Woman Suffrage Movement.—The chief purpose of Miss Anthony's life work was to secure for women the right to vote. When still a young woman she made speeches and held conventions in all the counties of New York State in behalf of equal rights for women. At this time, her cause was unpopular. She was ridiculed and abused as an unwomanly "freak" and a fanatic, but she possessed a keen sense of humor, and did not lose her temper when abused. She urged that the United States Constitution be changed so as to require that women be allowed to vote. In 1872 at an election in New York she went to a voting place and cast her vote. She was tried for illegal voting, and sentenced to pay a fine, which, however, was never collected. Not many years after her death the cause which she had advocated so long and faithfully was victorious: the 19th amendment to the constitution of the United States was adopted (1920) giving to all American women the right to vote.

CLARA BARTON, FOUNDER OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

A Child Nurse.—Clara Barton's girlhood home was in Massachusetts. When she was eleven years of age, an older brother fell from the roof of the barn and was seriously hurt. Little Clara took her place at the bedside of her big brother and begged to be allowed to nurse him. She proved herself to be so quiet and careful and clear-headed that the doctor finally per-

mitted her to take charge of the patient. For two long years, she rarely left his sick room until at last the sufferer was restored to health. "That child's a born nurse," the neighbors said.

An Army Nurse.—When the War between the States broke out Clara Barton was a clerk in a government department in Washington City. She began helping to care for the wounded soldiers in the Washington hospitals. She soon decided that there was greater need for nurses on the battle fields than in the hospitals. She was told by officers that the battle line was no place for a woman, but she overcame all opposition and on many bloody conflicts during the war she came to be known and loved by the Northern soldiers as the "Angel of the Battlefield." Many times she narrowly escaped death, her clothing being torn by shot or fragment of shell. Wagon trains of hospital supplies were placed at her command, and she directed their movements and distribution with great skill and success.

A Red Cross Worker in Europe.—After the close of the War between the States, Miss Barton visited Europe. While in Switzerland, she learned of the work of the Red Cross Society for the relief of sick and wounded soldiers. She was deeply interested, and during the war between France and Prussia (Germany), she gave her aid in Red Cross work on European battlefields. She served here splendidly, as she had served on the battlefields of America.

Founder of the American Red Cross.—On her return to America, Miss Barton determined that the

United States should have part in the International Red Cross work. Her efforts were crowned with success and the American Red Cross was formed with Clara Barton as its first President. Through her influence, the "American Amendment" was adopted extending Red Cross relief work to calamities in time of peace. She led the Red Cross work in far-away Armenia, and again, during the Spanish War, in Cuba, besides heading relief expeditions for flood sufferers in our own country. Clara Barton died at the age of ninety years, honored by kings and queens of foreign lands and loved by countless thousands throughout the world.

FRANCES WILLARD AND THE FIGHT AGAINST LIQUOR

A Long Journey.—Nowadays, a trip from Ohio to Wisconsin can be made on the train in a few hours. Seventy-five years ago it took Mr. Willard and his family nearly thirty days to make the journey. They traveled in a wagon train of three ox wagons with curved tops of white canvas. In the first wagon was Mr. Willard, the father; in the next the boy Oliver was the driver; while in the third sat Mrs. Willard with her two little girls, Frances and Mary, nestled amid the bed clothes and household furniture. They cooked their bacon and potatoes on the ground, camp fashion, and at night slept in the wagons when not awakened by the howling of wolves. On their way they passed a small settlement on swampy ground at the southern end of Lake Michigan. This little settlement afterward grew to be the City of Chicago.

School Girl, Teacher, College President.—After be-

coming established in her new home in Wisconsin, Frances Willard attended a country school, then entered a girl's college in Illinois where she graduated. She was editor of the college paper and an eager student, though fond of mischievous pranks. She traveled in Europe and later became president of the College where she graduated and afterward Dean of Women at Northwest University (Illinois).

Leader in the Temperance Movement.—At this time, drunkenness was common. Saloons, or "barrooms," flourished in every town and whiskey was kept in the homes of many of the best people. A great movement against whiskey called the "Temperance Crusade" was started. Bands of women whose husbands, sons and fathers were victims of drunkenness, marched through the streets singing hymns, praying and begging the saloon keepers to quit their business. Miss Willard became deeply interested in the cause of the women and began making speeches in behalf of temperance. She decided to give up teaching and devote her life to the fight against liquor and its evils.

A National Leader.—Miss Willard's eloquent speeches attracted nation-wide attention. She became President of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union and she traveled through the southern states and every part of the Union organizing branches of the W. C. T. U. In 1884 she was one of the organizers of the Prohibition party. She died at the age of 58.

Honored at the Nation's Capital.—Twenty-two years after the death of Frances Willard, the cause to which she devoted the best years of her life and for which

she did more than any other person, finally triumphed, when the 20th amendment to the constitution of the United States was adopted, forever prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor in the United States.

In the capitol at Washington, the State of Illinois has placed the marble image of Frances Willard as one of its foremost citizens. The Congressman who presented the statue said in closing his address:

"Frances E. Willard once said: 'If I were asked what is the true mission of the ideal woman, I would say it is to make the whole world home-like.' Illinois, therefore, presents this statue not only as a tribute to her whom it represents — one of the foremost women of America — but as a tribute to woman and her mighty influence upon our national life; to woman in the home; to woman wherever she is toiling for the good of humanity; to woman everywhere who has ever stood for God, for home, for native land."

THE FEDERATED WOMEN'S CLUBS

A New Force in American Life.—Within the last thirty years a new force has made itself felt in the life and history of the American people. An increasing number of women — now more than two million — living in every state of the Union have banded themselves together — first in single groups called clubs; then the separate clubs in order to be helpful to each other and have greater power in carrying out their common purposes, have through their representatives formed "federations," city, district, state and national. This great army of club women with their won-

derful organization to concentrate and direct their native talents, trained minds and boundless enthusiasm, have been exerting a mighty and an ever-widening influence upon the welfare and happiness of the American people.

Aims and Achievements of the Federated Women's Clubs.—The object of the General Federation of Women's Clubs as stated in the constitution is "to bring into communication with each other the various women's clubs throughout the world, in order that they may compare methods of work and become mutually helpful." Thus the field of the Federation is world-wide. The work of Women's Clubs includes every conceivable subject connected with the purity and happiness of the home, the protection of the helpless and unfortunate, the progress of education, the promotion of the health, happiness and morals of the community. Women's clubs have secured the passage of laws to guard the public health, establish public libraries, kindergartens and children's playgrounds, to protect women and children working in factories and elsewhere, to establish juvenile courts, to provide night schools and vacation schools, and in hundreds of other ways they have helped to make the lives of all the people happier and purer and more useful.

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